

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to Figures 1-5. These sheets, which include Figures 1-5, replace the original sheet including Figures 1-5.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This paper is submitted in response to the Final Office Action dated March 21, 2007. At that time, claims 1-3, 6, 7, 9-16, 18, 20-26, and 29-32 were pending. In the Office Action, the Examiner requested a new drawing sheet. Claims 9, 18, and 29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as being indefinite. Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 0 414 300 to Kruezer (hereinafter "Kruezer '300") in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,006,690 to Pierce (hereinafter "Pierce"). Claims 1, 2, 9-10, 12, 15, 16, 18, 22-26, 29, 31, 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over DE 39 27 383 to Kruezer (hereinafter "Kruezer '383") in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 20020125084 filed by Kruezer (hereinafter "Kruezer '084"). Claims 1, 9, 13-15, 18, 20, 21, 26, 29-30, and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Utility Model No. 56-99858 to Masahiro (hereinafter "Masahiro '858") in view of Kruezer '084. Claims 1, 9, 13-15, 18, 20, 21, 26, 29-30, and 32, were rejected Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), or in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), over Japanese Utility Model No. 61-222868 to Tetsuo *et al.* (hereinafter "Tetsuo '868").

By this paper, claims 13, 20, 23, and 30 have been canceled. Also, Applicants respond to the issues raised in the Office Action. Favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

I. Drawings

Applicants note that the amended drawings sheets were not received by the Examiner. Accordingly, the replacement sheets are being resubmitted herewith. Applicants believe that the drawing sheet addresses all of the issues raised by the Examiner. However, if the Examiner has further questions regarding the drawings, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

II. Rejection of Claims 9, 18, and 29 Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claims 9, 18, and 29 under § 112 on grounds that "it is unclear whether a confusing variety of terms, such as 'particles' and 'at least one solid mass'... refer to the same or different things. Applicants have amended claims 9, 18, and 29 to clarify that the solid mass is different from the particles. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the present claims are sufficiently definite under § 112. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

III. Rejection of Claims 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, and 11, Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kruezer '300 in view of Pierce. With respect to these claims, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

It is well settled that a claim cannot be rejected under § 103(a) unless all of the claim elements are taught or suggested by the cited references. *See* MPEP § 2143.03. In the present case, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite that "the outer rim comprises a sealable hole for inserting the fluid into the internal chamber, wherein the sealable hole allows adjustment of the type and volume of the fluid over the life of the vehicle." Support for this claim element is found in Figure 5 and on pages 16 through 17 of the specification. Applicants cannot find any teaching in either Pierce or Kruezer '300 regarding a sealable hole that allows adjustment of the type or volume of the fluid during the life of the vehicle. Accordingly, as this claim element is not taught or suggested by the references, a rejection under § 103(a) cannot be sustained. Favorable consideration and withdrawal of the present rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 6, 7, 9, and 11 depend from independent claim 1. Accordingly, these dependent claims are allowable over the cited references for the same reasons put forth above in conjunction with claim 1. Favorable consideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 9-10, 12, 15, 16, 18, 22-26, 29, 31, and 32 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 2, 9-10, 12, 15, 16, 18, 22-26, 29, 31, 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kruezer '383 in view Kruezer '084. Claims 10 and 232 have been canceled. However, for the remaining claims, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Again, in order to sustain a rejection under § 103(a), all of the claim elements must be taught or suggested by the prior art. In the present case, independent claims 1, 15, and 26 have all been amended to recite that "the outer rim comprises a sealable hole for inserting the fluid into the internal chamber, wherein the sealable hole allows adjustment of the type and volume of the fluid over the life of the vehicle." Similarly, independent claim 32 has been amended to

recite that “the outer rim means comprises a sealable hole for inserting the fluid into the internal chamber, wherein the sealable hole allows adjustment of the type or volume of the fluid over the life of the vehicle.” Applicants submit that this claim element is not taught or suggested by either Kruezer ‘383 or Kruezer ‘084. Accordingly, as all claim elements are not found in the cited references, the rejection of independent claims 1, 15, 26, and 32 under § 103(a) must be withdrawn. Favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

Claims 2, 9, and 12 depend from independent claim 1. Claims 16, 18, and 22, 24-25 depend from independent claim 15. Claims 29 and 31 depend from independent claim 26. Accordingly, these dependent claims are allowable over the cited references for the same reasons put forth above in conjunction with independent claims 1, 15 and 26. Favorable consideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

V. Rejection of Claims 1, 9, 13-15, 18, 20, 21, 26, 29-30, and 32 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 9, 13-15, 18, 20, 21, 26, 29-30, and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Masahiro ‘858 in view of Kruezer ‘084. Claims 13, 20, 23, and 30 have been canceled. However, for the other claims, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Again, in order to sustain a rejection under § 103(a), all of the claim elements must be taught or suggested by the prior art. In the present case, independent claims 1, 15, and 26 have been amended to recite that the “fluid is selected from a group consisting of water, oil, grease, antifreeze, and a combination thereof.” Such a claim element is not taught or suggested by either Kruezer ‘084 or Masahiro ‘858. Accordingly, as this claim element is not found in the cited references, independent claims 1, 15, and 26 cannot be rejected under § 103(a). Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 32 has been amended to recite that “the dampening means is selected from a group consisting of water, oil, grease, antifreeze, and a combination thereof.” Again, this amendment is not taught or suggested by either Kruezer ‘084 or Masahiro ‘858. Accordingly, this claim is similarly allowable.

Claims 9 and 14 depend from independent claim 1. Claims 18, 21, 22, and 24-25 depend from independent claim 15. Claim 29 depends from independent claim 26. Accordingly, these

dependent claims are allowable over the cited references for the same reasons put forth above in conjunction with independent claims 1, 15 and 26. Favorable consideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

VI. Rejection of Claims 1, 9, 13-15, 18, 20, 21, 26, 29-30, and 32 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) or Alternatively Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 9, 13-15, 18, 20, 21, 26, 29-30, and 32, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), over Tetsuo '868. Claims 13, 20, 23, and 30 have been canceled. However, for the remaining claims, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Both § 102(b) and § 103(a) require that all of the claim elements be found in the prior art reference. In the present case, independent claims 1, 15, and 26 have been amended to recite that the "fluid is selected from a group consisting of water, oil, grease, antifreeze, and a combination thereof." Such a claim element is not taught or suggested by Tetsuo '868. Accordingly, as this claim element is not found in the cited reference, independent claims 1, 15, and 26 cannot be rejected under § 102(b) or § 103(a). Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 32 has been amended to recite that "the dampening means is selected from a group consisting of water, oil, grease, antifreeze, and a combination thereof." Again, this amendment is not taught or suggested by Tetsuo '868. Accordingly, this claim is similarly allowable.

Claims 9 and 14 depend from independent claim 1. Claims 18, 21, 22, and 24-25 depend from independent claim 15. Claim 29 depends from independent claim 26. Accordingly, these dependent claims are allowable over the cited references for the same reasons put forth above in conjunction with independent claims 1, 15 and 26. Favorable consideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

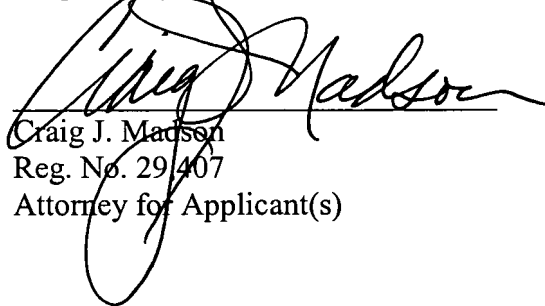
VII. New Claims

New claims 33-39 have been added to the present case. Some of these claims recite that the steering wheel comprises a removable plug and are similar to claim 14. The fee for adding two new independent claims is submitted herewith. Favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

VIII. Conclusion

Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. If there are any remaining issues preventing allowance of the pending claims that may be clarified by telephone, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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